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MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS GOING ON NASA ADVENTURE

Middle school students from across the country will be heading to the east coast for a NASA adventure in exploration using balloons at the edge of space.

The students from NASA Explorer Schools (NES) will participate in "Balloon Adventure Week" at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center Wallops Flight Facility in Wallops Island, Va., March 14 – 17.

Two students and their teacher from five NES schools in Tennessee, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Washington and Indiana were selected to travel to Virginia to prepare their experiment samples for flight on a future high altitude NASA scientific balloon mission.

The students and teachers will have hands-on participation in an education flight project working with engineers, conducting integration work and being involved with launch operations.

"Students will have opportunities to work with the NASA team to participate in experiments that they have designed to answer questions about high altitude conditions. During the workshop experience, they also will learn about potential careers with NASA," said Peggy Steffen, NASA Explorer Schools Program Manager, Washington, D.C. "We hope this experience will be something they remember and will spark an interest in pursuing coursework and careers in mathematics, science and engineering."

The students and teachers will work directly with NASA launch experts to prepare their Space Experiment Module for a future science balloon flight and will participate in a smaller weather balloon mission from the launch control center at Wallops.

The student experiments will focus on the effects of solar radiation on seed growth, paint and other insulation materials as shielding from solar radiation, and the effects of altitude on cell phones.

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The experiment samples will fly on a large scientific balloon, typically the size of a football field, to an altitude of 100,000 to 130,000 feet. The flight is expected to last from 6 to 12 hours.

After the flight, the experiment samples will be returned to the students to compare with un-flown control samples.

The participating schools are:

- Battle Academy, Chattanooga, Tennessee
- Belle Chasse Academy, Belle Chasse, Louisiana
- Cumberland Middle School, Cumberland, Wisconsin
- Key Peninsula Middle School, Lakebay, Washington
- Franke Park Elementary School, Fort Wayne, Indiana

The schools represent 5 of the 100 NASA Explorer Schools in the program at the present time. The schools partner with NASA over a three-year period to increase student interest, performance and participation in science, mathematics, and technology fields of study and careers.

For information about the NASA Explorer Schools Program on the Internet, visit:

<http://explorerschools.nasa.gov>

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